

**Mount Ascutney
Regional Commission**

Minutes of Monday, June 21, 2021
MARC Offices, Ascutney, VT
and via Zoom

Commissioners Present: Tom Bock, Chester; Kathy Rondeau, Reading; Tom Marsh, Windsor; Wayne Wheelock, Baltimore; Tom Kenyon, West Windsor; Terry Carter, Ludlow; Walter Martone, Springfield.

Staff Present: Tom Kennedy, Jason Rasmussen, Cynthia Porter.

Tom Bock opened the meeting at 12:04 PM.

1. Changes to the Agenda
 - a. Tom Kennedy asked to discuss a new DEC grant for J&L under new business.
2. Secretary's Report
 - a. *Walter Martone made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 24, 2021 MARC meeting with a minor correction. Second by Terry Carter. Motion passed unanimously.*
3. Treasurer's Report
 - a. *Tom Marsh made a motion to receive the May 2021 financial report. Second by Tom Kenyon. Motion passed unanimously.*
4. Election of Officers
 - a. *Tom Kenyon made a motion to appoint Tom Bock as Chair, Kathy Rondeau as Vice Chair, and Tom Marsh as Secretary/Treasurer; Bob Flint as an At-Large Commissioner; and to appoint Jason Rasmussen to represent MARC on Connecticut River Joint Commissions (CRJC), and Chris Yurek to be the Alternate for CRJC. Second by Wayne Wheelock. Motion passed unanimously.*
5. Newspaper of Record
 - a. MARC determined that the Valley News will serve as the newspaper of record. Staff may use additional media sources to advertise for other public hearings or meetings.
6. Approval of FY22 Budget
 - a. Cynthia Porter reported that only a few minor changes were made since last month; the changes did not affect the bottom line.
 - b. *Walter Martone made a motion to approve the FF22 budget as presented. Second by Wayne Wheelock. Motion passed unanimously.*
7. Regional Transportation Project Submission
 - a. Jason Rasmussen and Otis Munroe reviewed the memo on the proposed new transportation projects as recommended by the TAC. Walter asked for clarification of the Weathersfield project. Otis indicated it was identified by VTtrans and involves replacement of signal equipment at the VT Route 131/US Route 5 intersection in Ascutney.

- b. *Kathy Rondeau made a motion to authorize submission of the TAC-recommended transportation projects for the region, as presented, to VTrans for the Vermont Project Selection and Prioritization Process. Second by Walter Martone. Motion passed unanimously.*

8. Transportation Annual Work Program

- a. Jason Rasmussen and Otis Munroe discussed the new transportation work program and budget as detailed in the agenda packet. It includes a 2.5% funding increase. There is less activity this year with Municipal Roads General Permits, which allows us more time to assist towns with other inventory work. Two primary new tasks include coordinating with Vermont Local Roads on road foreman trainings and working with VTrans to address the new equity in transportation requirement.
- b. *Tom Marsh made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to finalize and submit the FFY22 transportation work program and budget to VTrans, based on additional feedback from the TAC and VTrans Planning Coordinator. Second by Kathy Rondeau. Motion passed unanimously.*
- c. *Terry Carter made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Procurement Self-Certification Form and submit it to V Trans as presented. Second by Walter Martone. Motion passed unanimously.*

9. Discussion of Ascutney Professional Building

- a. Tom Kennedy discussed options for the currently vacant old post office building. One option is to sell the building for commercial office uses, but maintain ownership of the land. Another option is to maintain ownership of the building and consider converting it into an apartment. Parking is a consideration. Permit amendments would be necessary.
- b. Converting the former Ennis office space into a one-bedroom apartment was also discussed. An architect developed plans. Rough costs are estimated to be up to \$30,000. Construction should wait until next year when contractors are more available and, hopefully, building materials costs go down. Permits will be needed for this conversion.
- c. *Walter Martone made a motion to approve staff to move forward with the permitting process for converting both spaces into residential units. Second by Kathy Rondeau. Motion passed unanimously.*

10. Discussion of Executive Director Transition Plan

- a. Tom Bock reported that the Executive Committee has been meeting regarding a transition plan. Tom Kennedy will be stepping down as Executive Director and taking the new position of Director of Community Development on January 1, 2022. The tasks for the Director of Community Development are described in more detail in the job description included in the agenda packet. Jason Rasmussen will become the new Executive Director on January 1, 2021.
- b. *Walter Martone made a motion to approve this new staffing plan and the new job description as presented. Second by Tom Kenyon. Motion passed unanimously.*

11. New Business

- a. Tom Kennedy reported that we have received an RFP from the VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for brownfields money to demolish sections of the J&L building in Springfield. There is about \$4 million. SRDC asked MARC to receive and administer these funds. This work could start as soon as in August.
- b. *Walter Martone made a motion to allow staff to respond to DEC's RFP, accept approximately \$4 million to demolish the Jones and Lamson #1 building in Springfield, open a new bank account for these funds, and to authorize the Chair to sign the grant agreement following review by the Executive Committee. Second by Kathy Rondeau. Motion passed unanimously.*

12. Old Business

- a. Jason Rasmussen reported that the Keys to the Valley planning project is nearing an end, and the effort is transitioning into an implementation phase. Implementation, initially, means working with towns on zoning improvements, maintaining the website, continuing communications, coordinating with partner organizations on a regional housing fund, looking at the feasibility of a regional housing utility, and other coordination and communication efforts, as funds allow. There was consensus to continue working with the other regional planning commission, Vital Communities and the new implementation committee to try and address the housing needs in this area.
- b. Tom Kennedy reported that MARC received an additional \$330,000 in brownfields RLF funds.
- c. Tom Kennedy provided a report on ARPA funding. The Commissioners asked Tom to continue to help towns and forward important ARPA information to town officials.

13. Adjourn

Kathy Rondeau made a motion to adjourn at 1:30 p.m. Second by Tom Kenyon. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Rasmussen